arranging marriages, the number of marriages by abduction is diminishing rapidly in the various communities.

It should be noted, also, that the practice of firing guns, as part of the wedding ceremony, is not an indication of the earlier custom of marriage by abduction, when the groom and his kinsmen frequently had to use their firearms; but is merely of religio-magical origin. It is done, as the people believe, to keep the evil spirits away from the married pair.

In examining the marriage procedure as performed by the Svans, we discussed briefly the ceremonies of matchmaking and betrothal and the facts connected with them.[1] After the betrothal the wedding ceremony takes place.

Among the Svans the wedding is performed by their illiterate priests, called *papi*. The procedure is a mixture of the Christian ceremonies of the Georgian Church and additional rites which originated in the people's superstition and phantasy. Thus, for example, instead of holding crowns over the heads of the marrying couple, as in the Georgian Church, the Svans use chintz caps specially made for the occasion. The prayers are read in the Georgian language but their meaning is not understood by the people. One prayer is interwoven with another and badly distorted. As a characteristic feature of the ceremony, we must note the ceremonial kissing of the bride and groom, and the sewing of their garments with a needle by the *papi*.

After the wedding ceremony the celebration is arranged in the house of the groom. The bride is led into the house with veiled face. The veil is discarded at the entrance after the bride passes the threshold. The bride passes under crossed daggers—a universal custom among all Georgians and practiced as a protection against the evil spirits. The bride is met in the door by the near relatives of the groom with a cup full of wheat flour—the symbol of abundance and prosperity. The bride takes the cup and slowly walks with it in her hands around the room. Then she is led to the cup containing honey, which she must taste by dipping her finger in it. This custom of giving honey to the bride is universal among all groups of the Georgian nation, and may be interpreted as the symbol of a sweet future conjugal life. After

[1] [See cat. 116, p 77 -- Analyst]
[2] [See cat. 116, p 78 ff -- Analyst]

6: Grigolia E-4, 5 (no date) 1939 RII Georgia RII

841 tribe of the Caucasus, but not to the one of the Khevsurs. The Khevsur is forbidden to take part in the construction of a *samrevlo*. This rule is enjoined by the *Khati*, the patron saint of the group. If the rule is violated, the Khevsur believes he will be punished by the *Khati*[1]: his herds and flocks will be killed, his whole property destroyed, and he himself will be driven away.

The samrevlo is a small quadrangular hut, so low that a man cannot stand upright in it. It is built of stones, generally without any mortar, with a low roof of straw or timber and mud, with one small door facing the village and one small hole in the roof serving as a window and also as an outlet for smoke. There is no furniture at all, but just some straw on the earthen floor around the hearth in the center, and a few dishes and a jar for water.

784 841 The women who occupy a *samrevlo*,[2] or, to use the Georgian expression, who are *samrevloth gasuli*—meaning in English, "gone to the *samrevlo*"—strew charcoal around the hut in order to keep away the evil spirits, who are supposed to be afraid of charcoal.

[278] Incidentally, it should be noted that, because of the magical power which the people ascribe to charcoal, it is used in many instances for medical purposes and as protection against the evil spirits, as in the case of the *samrevlo*.

841 These huts of the menstruating women—the *samrevlos* of the Khevsurs and Pshavs—are situated usually together near a river or brook outside the village, about one mile distant from it. Be-

[844] sides the menstruating women, the women with new-born babies also live in the *samrevlo*. They move from the *kokhi*—the special huts for childbirth—into the *samrevlo* within a few days after delivery.

Among the Svans also, as among the Khevsurs, Pshavs and Tushes, the woman with monthly issue is regarded as highly unclean and her husband does not dare at that time to enter the sanctuary (*Khati*) or to bring a sacrifice to the patron saint of the community, because he himself is regarded as unclean and unworthy in the eyes of the deity. Unlike the Khevsurs, Pshavs and Tushes, the Svans do not build special huts for their menstruating women; and the Tushes, whose country is nearer the civilized

1 [see cat. 116, p. 25 ff. -- Analyst]
2 [i.e., menstrual hut; see cat. 116, pp. 91-92 -- Analyst]

6: Grigolia E-4, 5 (no date) 1939 RI1 Georgia RI1

thank-offering for the success of the hunt, and the flesh is divided equally among all the hunters.

The Svans have especially elaborate customs connected with hunting, which they regard as a sacred affair. The religious character of the hunt is explained by their belief in the existence of deities for the protection of game and hunters. The hunters are respected by the people who consider them fortunate in enjoying the favor of the deities. According to their conviction, not everyone may succeed in the hunt, but only those who are known for their irreproachable conduct and high morality. The hunter must live a clean life and be careful in his relations with women, who are regarded as unclean. The hunter must have no intercourse with other women than his wife. Even with her he is obliged to cease relations one day before the hunting expedition. He has no right to start for the hunt when any woman in his own family is having monthly issue, nor even if such a woman be one of his own neighbors. It is also necessary for him to avoid the proximity of women with new-born babies until they have been purified by a priest.

Besides avoiding women, the hunter must pay his respects to the killed game and treat the horns, bones, and other parts of the carcass with reverence. If he does not, the hunter will be punished by the god of the hunt, who will make him unsuccessful in all his undertakings. Thus, for example, one hunter from the community of Ushkul, related[8] that ever since his brother became angry at something and threw the leg of a wild goat which he had killed into the dung-heap, he always suffer failure in the hunt.

The hunter goes alone or is accompanied by a helper, who carries his arms and other things and whose duty it is to bring home the game. He has the special name of *mikatsiri*, meaning "the carrier of the leader sack;" the word *katsi* meaning sack.

When the hunter reaches the place of his destination, where he has decided to hunt, he lights candles, fixes them upon a tree or stone along with burning coals, and throws on them the pieces of beeswax. If he has brought flour instead of bread, he bakes

[8] Dmitriev: 168.